WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

WILDLIFE RESOURCES
DIVISION

WEST VIRGINIA NONGAME NEWS

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WINTER 1986

Nongame Project Review

• Cooperative Projects

Twenty-eight cooperative project proposals and 4 research grants were submitted for consideration to the Nongame Citizens Advisory Council. Selections were made in early December. Twenty-seven cooperative project grants and one research grant were awarded for 1986 projects. Application booklets for 1987 projects will be available in April of 1986.

Submitted projects were well written and varied. Some of those funded for 1986 included: construction of a seminatural stream pool to study the ecology and behavior of fishes; repair and development of bird sanctuaries, interpretive nature trails, bluebird trails and wildlife observation areas; construction of winter bird feeding stations; radio public service announcements concerning nongame wildlife and the WV Program; stream improvement projects; a display to educate the public about the beneficial aspects of hawks and owls; and a distribution study of the timber rattlesnake.

There will be some changes in the Cooperative Projects Program for 1987. The due date for 1987 proposal submission will be November 30, 1986. Selections will be made early in 1987 and project completion required within one year. It is hoped that these changes will boost participation in the program, facilitate administrative tasks and better coincide with the schedules of conservation organizations.

• WV Mammal Survey

Beginning in April 1985, the WV Nongame Wildlife Program embarked on a seven-year project to conduct a survey of the mammals of West Virginia and to write the State's first comprehensive book on the subject. The principal investigators are Dr. Hugh H. Genoways and Dr. Duane A. Schlitter, both curators of mammals from the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and Dr. Mary Etta Hight, Associate Professor of Zoology from Marshall University.

The mammals of West Virginia have never been the subject of a comprehensive publication. Prior to 1949, several brief lists were compiled, but without the benefit of scientific field studies. From 1949 to 1951 the West Virginia Conservation Commission, forerunner of the DNR, conducted a mammal survey throughout the State. The results are contained in a PhD dissertation that is not generally available. The current investigators plan to complete this earlier study by surveying groups of mammals in areas of West Virginia that were not previously covered, studying the interrelationships of the State's game and nongame species, and revisiting some of the sites contained in the original survey to assess any changes that may have occurred over the years.

A survey of mammals, especially in areas of rugged terrain, is not an easy undertaking. Many of WV's 67 different mammals are secretive, some are only active at night, and most are sensitive to the presence of humans and their activities. Thus, the fieldwork involved requires considerable labor, time, ingenuity, and special equipment. To facilitate this fieldwork, the investigators will be conducting summer field classes through Marshall University beginning in 1986. College and university students enrolled in the classes will be trained in all phases of mammalian survey work and all student work will be carried out under the supervision of the principle investigators.

This study will benefit all the people of WV as the information gathered will be used by various resource agencies to help maintain, and even improve, the environmental conditions of the State. It is also hoped that the additional knowledge concerning the mammals of the State will enhance citizen appreciation and support for our wildlife resources.

Continued on Page Two.....

• Nongame Wildlife Observation Area

In 1983, an 11 acre tract was donated to the Nongame Wildlife Program to be developed as a public wildlife observation area. The property, located in a residential area adjacent to Harper's Ferry, Jefferson Co., was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Bryon H. Webb. To date, a small parking area has been constructed and plans for an interpretive trail are being drafted. Development will be kept to a minimum, however, in order to preserve this environment.

• Nongame Science Fair Awards

Attention WV science students and teachers! The DNR's Nongame Wildlife Program is offering awards for outstanding science fair projects featuring nongame wildlife. The award will consist of a $25 cash prize and a special certificate issued by the WV DNR for both the senior high and junior high school biological science divisions. The project must deal with some aspect of the biology of WV's nongame wildlife. Both individual and group projects are eligible for the awards. For more information write to your regional science fair director, or to the WV Nongame Wildlife Program.

Endangered Species Notes

• West Virginia has had its first plant, the running buffalo clover, *Trifolium stoliniferum,* proposed for endangered status by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Once found in at least 8 states between West Virginia and Kansas, the plant was last recorded in WV over 40 years ago. However, in 1983, Rodney Bartgis, an ecologist with the WV Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, found the clover while searching for other rare plants. The plant was so named because it occupied sites disturbed by buffalo herds. In fact, one of the current sites, located in Webster County, is near the spot where in 1825 West Virginia's last wild bison was reportedly killed. The other location for the clover is in Fayette County. Both occupy sites that are disturbed, although less drastically than those created by the buffalo of long ago.

• In the summer issue of the *Nongame News,* we reported on an extremely rare mammal, the black-footed ferret. Since that time, a sad event has transpired. One of the 6 ferrets taken to the Wyoming Game and Fish's Wildlife Research Unit for captive propagation died from canine distemper. It is not known how the disease was introduced, but ferrets are highly susceptible to distemper and it is easily transmitted between animals. Since it is certain that the captive ferret was exposed to the disease in the wild, it is presumed that all the ferrets within the infected area will die. This is particularly disheartening as this is the largest known colony of this critically endangered animal. Emergency measures are being taken by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to save the remaining ferrets.

• Florida may be able to establish North America's third flock of the endangered whooping crane *(Gus americana)* as a result of an ongoing study. Although the other two populations of whoopers are found in western states, Florida has excellent crane habitat and currently supports a population of about 4,000 Florida sandhill cranes. Florida hopes to use their nonmigratory subspecies of sandhill cranes as foster parents for whooping cranes. Theoretically, this could eventually establish a population of whooping cranes that would not migrate, thus safeguarding the population from the many dangers associated with migration.

As a test of this idea, a study was commissioned to substitute eggs of migratory sandhill cranes into the nests of the nonmigratory subspecies. Even though only 19 eggs were substituted, results suggest that young cranes of migratory parents fostered by nonmigratory parents may remain nonmigratory.

• On October 29, 1985, the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources' Nongame Wildlife Program hosted a meeting in Elkins with representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Virginia Game Commission, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and several academicians currently working with flying squirrels. The focus of the meeting was to exchange current information on the newly listed endangered northern flying squirrel, which is endangered in North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia, and to begin to delineate recovery efforts for the mammal.

West Virginia Butterfly Update For 1985

The 1985 survey of butterfly distribution and abundance in West Virginia yielded 285 new county records, including one new State record. This information is the result of the efforts of 18 cooperators statewide, although assistance is still needed in the western counties from Mason north to Wetzel.

A total of 120 species have now been documented to occur in West Virginia. The new record, *Staphylus hayhurstii,* or southern sooty-wing skipper, was found along the Shenandoah River in Jefferson County. The butterfly boosted the recorded skippers to 40 within the State. It is expected that at least 2 additional species of skippers remain to be discovered.

The 1985 spring survey, conducted in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources' Nongame Wildlife

Program and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), concentrated efforts on shale barren species of moths and butterflies. Dale Schweitzer of Boston's TNC spent 3 days with DNR wildlife biologist Tom Allen exploring the shale barren sites. New locations for a rare species, *Prygus centaureae wyandot,* the Alpine grizzled skipper, were found in Hampshire and Hardy counties. This species is restricted to open areas along barren habitat which provide its food plant, cinquifoil. The Alpine grizzled skipper, being rare globally, but probably more abundant in West Virginia than elsewhere in the East, is in need of further investigation to determine its present status.

Shale barren habitats are limited in size and number, and are thus fragile environments in West Virginia. Due to the apparent selection of more open areas by the rare butterfly in these habitats, any aerial spraying program with insecticides may have detrimental effects on the skipper populations. The gypsy moth is known to occur in this area and could present problems in the future if populations increase substantially and control measures become necessary. A study plan for the skipper, *P. c. wyandot,* will be forthcoming this spring.

An investigation of the small remaining habitat for *Speyeria idalia,* the regal fritillary, was conducted with Nature Conservancy personnel Dale Schweitzer and Rodney Bartgis. This butterfly is rapidly declining throughout its eastern range and has disappeared in many areas. The only remaining West Virginia population of this species, located in Monongalia County, is currently threatened with extinction due to development by the landowner. A study to help the rare butterfly is being proposed by WV University personnel in Morgantown.

Thanks are extended to all who assisted in the collection of the 1985 distribution data. For persons interested in butterflies, assistance is needed for 1986, especially from the Ohio River counties. For further information, contact the WV Nongame Wildlife Program.

From Our Readers . . .

Memories of Greenland Gap

By Leland S. Devore

One of the less obvious things that makes the outdoors so attractive to a large segment of the population is the pleasant memories that linger after a sojourn, even a short one, at an unusually interesting spot and away from the routine of urban life. These are not extraordinary or particularly unusual events, but merely "something" that sticks in your mind and is recalled time and again with a satisfying feeling of "yes, that *was* great, and I'll never forget it."

An example: I read an account recently in which the author was of the opinion (and I agreed with him) that the red-headed woodpecker is becoming less and less common. It is all too seldom that this bird is seen when birding in the eastern U.S., and unfortunately West Virginia is no exception. But this reminded me of one afternoon almost ten years ago that still makes me feel good when I think of it.

I was fortunate to be birding for a couple of days with a small group led by West Virginia's late, great outdoorsman, "Chuck" Conrad. We were staying in one of the loveliest spots in the Mountain State, Greenland Gap in Grant County. That in itself was enough to be memorable, for the picture is still clear and sharp in my mind's eye — we were sitting on the rustic porch of a rather plush cabin just a few yards from a tumbling mountain stream that rushes through the gap over a long series of spectacular falls along its course toward the South Branch. Our view down the narrow valley showed the towering mountains on each side of the gap, and at the end, although several miles away, was the "rifle sight." This is a V-shaped notch in a sharp ridge with a finely tapered peak jutting up directly behind it, looking like the sight picture seen between the iron sights when aiming a gun.

It was getting well on into the afternoon but the sun was still high as we sat on that porch. Somehow the conversation got around to red-headed woodpeckers and I said they were one of my favorite birds, but I had not seen any in Greenland Gap, or for that matter, anywhere else for a couple of years. Chuck turned to me and said "I can show you three of them within 15 minutes of this porch." Now Chuck was not given to rash statements, so I was on my feet immediately and saying "lets go!"

Chuck and I hopped into my car and drove down to a small dirt road that wound its way up the mountain. We had not driven over a mile when we passed a small farm house with several large trees nearby and Chuck said, "stop!" We did, got out, and within two minutes we spotted, not the promised three, but *five* red-headed woodpeckers in those trees near the house. Not only spotted, but we had ample time to get out our binoculars and see the magnificent jet black, glistening white, and sparkling brilliant red coloration of those splendid birds.

Now in no way was that a great or earth-shaking experience, yet, I seldom see a red-headed woodpecker without recalling with a feeling of enjoyment, contentment and happiness that glorious mountain scenery of Greenland Gap and those five very cooperative woodpeckers! And thanks to The Nature Conservancy and other outdoor groups in West Virginia, I have a feeling those birds, or at least their progeny, are still there.

Memories like these can be retained and perhaps multiplied if you "DO SOMETHING WILD!" and check-off for the Nongame Wildlife Fund on your state income tax form. Unfortunately that old cliche "there are no free lunches" is true — it takes money to keep safe and secure the flora and fauna from which such memories are made. And I, for one, would hate to be without them.

The Department of Natural Resources offers its programs to people of all ages regardless of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin and is an equal opportunity employer.

WVHC

The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy (WVHC) is a private, non-profit voluntary organization started in 1969. Its objectives are "to promote, encourage, and work for the conservation — including both preservation and wise use — and appreciation of the scenic, historic, open space, wilderness, and outdoor recreation resources of West Virginia, and especially the Highlands Region..."

More than 700 people now belong to the Conservancy and support its conservation work. Members include people and organizations diverse in their personal interests and professions, but united by a common philosophy and goal. Most WVHC members are West Virginians, but many live outside the State's borders as transplanted West Virginians or those who have visited and loved what they found in our State.

Specific issues change over time but the Conservancy remains active in monitoring developments proposed for the highlands to ensure adverse impacts do not result. This work includes conducting land use studies, formulating management recommendations, stimulating community interest, educating the community about resource issues, and advocating legislation.

More specifically, the WVHC played a leading role in having Dolly Sods, Laurel Fork, Otter Creek and the Cranberry designated as federal wilderness areas. The Conservancy also works to protect other special habitats for rare plant and animal life and unique communities. Toward this end they have been actively involved in preventing the construction of the Davis Power Project, which would have flooded much of Canaan Valley. River conservation, in which the agency takes a corridor approach, is another goal. WVHC supports water projects only when they are economically sound and insure positive environmental and social impacts on a region. The WVHC works for strong laws and effective enforcement of federal and state surface mining acts, air pollution control, acid rain, industrial and mining discharges, hazardous wastes and stream sedimentation. Finally, the Conservancy has been active in monitoring recreational and developmental policy on National Forest and other public lands.

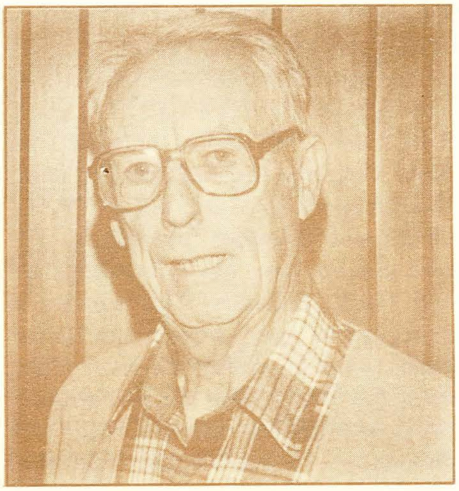
Conservancy members receive the monthly 8-page *Highlands Voice* which is filled with environmental news. An outings schedule is maintained during the winter and spring months to give members a chance to meet other members and participate in recreational activities.

The Conservancy also sponsors two special weekends each year, the Spring and Fall Reviews. These are usually at some scenic spot in the highlands of West Virginia and feature speakers, outings, and board meetings, giving members an opportunity to voice their opinions about the organization's activities.

For more information, write to: West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, Suite 201, 1206 Virginia Street, East, Charleston, WV 25301 or call (304) 344-8833.

Frozen Stars

Many a child and adult have wondered how the swirling and intricate designs of frost on a windowpane are formed. This mystery of winter occurs when water vapor, due to its molecular structure, forms regular, usually hexagonal crystals. A pattern will then grow as more and more water molecules freeze onto the original molecule. The actual design formed depends on many factors, including: the amount of moisture present, the temperature of both the air and glass, the presence and speed of wind currents near the windowpane, and the window surface itself. Even tiny irregularities of the glass, such as small abrasions or the lint left behind from cleaning windows, can influence the design. But the exact pattern is a secret that Jack Frost keeps mainly to himself.



Advisory Council Member

George R. (Dick) Trimble, Jr. is a retired research forester who worked 38 years for the U.S. Forest Service at several research facilities throughout the Northeast. During his career he worked on both timber and watershed problems. Upon retirement, Mr. Trimble was serving as Chief of Laboratory for the Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory. His primary field of interest was the silviculture of Appalachian hardwoods, specifically the multiple use relationships (including wildlife) of different types of forest management.

Educated at the University of Maine, Dick is author and co-author of more than 100 publications. Mr. Trimble currently resides in Elkins, WV and is a Fellow of the Society of American Foresters, as well as an active member of the Izaak Walton League.

Habitat Hint

- **Suet Cake Recipe**

Many birds such as woodpeckers, tufted titmice and nuthatches can be attracted to your backyard by providing suet. Here is a simple recipe: melt freshly ground or chopped beef or pork fat in a saucepan. Stir in as much cornmeal as the liquid will absorb. Mix in sunflower seeds, millet, and/or finely ground peanuts. Pour the mixture into cupcake tins and store in the freezer until ready to use.

The Skimmer, FL Nongame Newsletter
Vol. 1, No. 3, Fall 1985

The Barn Owl

Throughout history owls have been linked with witches, wizards and evil spirits, or thought of as messengers of ill-tidings. More than most owls, the common barn-owl *(Tyto alba)* has added to this supernatural reputation due to its preference for using church yards, deserted buildings and abandoned mine shafts instead of natural cavities for roosting places. Its cries have been described as blood-curdling and hair-raising, sending many once-brave souls in flight from a dark barn or "haunted" house. Looking beyond its mystery and reputation, the graceful barn-owl is actually beneficial to man, as well as a harmless and interesting bird of prey.

Known variously as the white, church or monkey-faced owl, the barn-owl enjoys a worldwide distribution, but is essentially restricted within latitudes 40^0 north and south of the equator. Although there are 11 species of barn owls and their allies in the world, only one is found in the United States. Some characteristics that set the barn-owl apart from other owls include: a heart-shaped rather than round facial disk; small, dark eyes; a short square tail instead of rounded; long, slender legs and a serration of the inner edge of the claw on the middle toe.

The common barn-owl is rather easy to identify, due to its relatively large size and white appearance. The bird is 14 to 20 inches in length with a wing span of 43 to 47 inches. While not in flight the wings are pointed and fold beyond the tail. The upperparts are an orange-buff color spotted with dark grey and white, and the face and underparts are white, sometimes speckled with a few black spots. The beak is pale yellow and the eyes and claws are black. Male and female barn-owls look very much alike, although the female is larger and often slightly darker.

Barn-owls are active mostly at night while dozing away the day in quiet corners of dark structures or groves of evergreen trees. They are excellent hunters, searching on the wing for their unsuspecting prey. As is true of most owls, their feathers are long and soft and the leading edge of the first primary wing feather has a saw-toothed edge, enabling owls to approach their quarry silently. In addition, barn-owls possess extremely well-developed eyes and ears, allowing them to take advantage of even faint light and the slightest sounds so that they may hunt at night. In fact, laboratory experiments have shown that barn owls can locate and capture their prey in total darkness by fixing on their calls or movements, often at frequencies well below human hearing. The bird's diet consists mainly of small mammals including mice, moles, shrews, rats, chipmunks, rabbits and occasionally bats, muskrats and skunks — only a small portion of their diet consists of songbirds. Barn-owls generally swallow their prey whole if the creature is not too large, regurgitating the undigested parts (bones, fur or feathers) in the form of a pellet. Usually two oval glossy black pellets are formed in a 24 hour period. To those interested in barn-owls, these pellets provide clues to the whereabouts of the bird as well as indicating the type of prey taken.

Barn-owls will mate for life with both parents feeding and guarding the young. Breeding and egg laying begin early in the year and may continue into late summer or early fall. No nest is built; the 3 to 11 eggs are layed directly on a surface in secluded places such as abandoned barn lofts and silos. The eggs are white or buff-white and more pointed than the round eggs of most owls. They are layed in 48 hour intervals, with incubation beginning with the first egg. Hatching occurs after 33 days. The young are thus of very different ages, which may be an adaptation in response to food availability. The older and larger chicks will be fed first at the expense of the younger — all will survive, however, if there is enough food. It is at this time that barn-owls do the most damage to a rodent population, as the nestlings will eat their own weight in food every night.

The newly-hatched young are clothed with a white down which is gradually replaced by a cream colored down. The nestlings will vacate the nest after 9 to 12 weeks, at which time they will be practically indistinguishable from their parents. If disturbed they will lower their heads and sway from side to side, uttering a hissing sound while snapping their beaks. Along with the adult bird, this presents a rather fearsome obstacle to a would-be enemy. The adult bird's only known predator is the great-horned owl, and, of course, man.

Since their diet consists mainly of small mammals, owls are generally associated with grass and pasture lands. In the past, the conversion of woodlands to farmlands favored the spread of this owl. Because the owl eats rats and mice, farmers encouraged this beneficial bird of prey by putting up nest boxes or creating access to barn lofts and roof spaces. Currently, however, the barn-owl population is in serious trouble. This is mainly due to the changes in land use practices favoring intensive row crop production, the loss of nesting sites through replacement of wooden barns with metal structures, the increase in pesticide use, and, despite its legal protection, the killing of these owls. In the Midwest, the bird has been declared endangered in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin. Ohio expects to add it to its endangered list in the near future. In WV, it is on the DNR list of Species of Special Concern. The barn-owl was probably never common to West Virginia, but its population has declined in recent years.

Although the best solution would be to restore or increase suitable habitat, individuals can still help by placing nest boxes or providing entrance holes into existing structures located near open, grassy areas. The WV Nongame Wildlife Program can provide information on nest box construction and placement. Since little is known about the distribution of the barn-owl in West Virginia, we would also like to hear from our readers concerning any sightings or confirmed nestings of this fascinating bird of prey.

Common Barn-Owl
Tyto alba

Mountaintop Structures: Hazards For Migrating Birds

By Albert R. Buckelew, Jr.
Bethany College

On the evening of October 15, 1985, an estimated 2,000 migrating birds were killed as they struck a three-story condominium at the Snowshoe Resort located on top of Cheat Mountain. A cold front had arrived the day before and the mountaintop was blanketed by a heavy layer of clouds and fog. The next day, wildlife biologists and local members of the Brooks Bird Club collected 1,336 birds, consisting mainly of thrushes, vireos and warblers. Many more birds were undoubtedly killed but not recovered as they were hidden by undergrowth or carried away by ravens and other predators that gathered to harvest this windfall feast. Although the birds were scattered throughout the area, most were found near lights that illuminate the outside of the condominium. One mercury vapor lamp had about 150 birds around its base.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated occurrence. Bird mortalities at airport ceilometers, tall buildings, and television and radio towers have been recorded for many years. One study conducted at a Florida television station tower recorded 42,384 dead birds of 189 species over 25 years. In another instance, a Wisconsin tower caused appalling kills, estimated to be as high as 20,000 and 30,000 birds in the falls of 1958 and 1964, respectively. Many ornithologists have noted a decline of warbler populations in recent years. The accumulated mortality at many towers and buildings may be adding to this decline.

There are several factors that contribute to this deadly phenomenon. Many migrating birds travel in large flocks. Those that migrate at night probably use an imprinted internal star map for navigation, comparing the internal map with the stars above. Under ordinary nocturnal weather conditions, these birds fly much higher than the tallest of manmade structures. However, in West Virginia, as in much of the eastern United States, large flocks of migrants follow the higher mountain ridges. This is one reason the workers of the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory at Red Creek on Dolly Sods in Grant County, West Virginia, have been able to band more than 100,000 birds during the facility's 28 years of operation. Coincidentally, this observatory is located north of Cheat Mountain, but on the same series of ridges.

When a fall cold front brings especially large flocks of migrating birds from their northern summer homes, the wind is from the north, and the night sky is cloudy, obscuring the stars, the stage is set for an avian disaster. Under these conditions, large concentrations of migrating birds are attracted to the glow of artificial lights on buildings and towers. The birds are confused by the lights and fly in circles around the structures, striking the structures and guy wires. Many observers report birds falling like rain during especially deadly conditions. When the sky clears during such an episode, the birds disperse, and presumably resume their migration flight using the stars for orientation. The largest kills occur in the fall, especially in late September and October. The majority of the birds killed in such incidents are thrushes, vireos and warblers, as in the case of the 1985 October Snowshoe kill.

The height of lighted obstacles is also an important contributing factor. In low areas there have been few reports of kills at towers under 800 feet. However, even low, well-lighted structures may present a hazard on mountaintop ridges customarily used as migration routes. The Snowshoe condominium stands out above the trees on the top of Cheat Mountain where the elevation averages 4680 feet. The roof of this building exceeds the height of Spruce Knob, West Virginia's tallest mountain.

More buildings have been constructed on our mountaintops in recent years than in the past, and plans for resorts and vacation homes promise even more such construction for the future. What can be done to reduce these migratory bird kills? Such buildings should be designed so as not to extend above the ridgetops if possible, and outside lighting should be kept to a minimum. Occupants and managers of buildings on our highest mountains should be made aware of the bird mortality problem. Bird kills can be significantly reduced simply by turning off outside lights on cloudy nights during peak migration in the fall and spring.

Rare Fish Find

This past summer, fisheries biologists from the WV DNR, along with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (SANCO), collected an adult specimen of the rare blue sucker *(Cycleptus elongatus)* at the Belleville lock and dam on the Ohio River. The blue sucker was present throughout the 19th century in the Ohio River from the Indiana to the Pennsylvania state line. At that time it was considered as a rather common, well-known and preferred food fish. Since 1925, the fish has undergone a drastic decline, most probably in response to increased turbidity and pollutants in the Ohio River. Finding the blue sucker again in Ohio River samples is indicative of the improved water quality of the Ohio, thanks to the cooperative efforts of several resource agencies.

Ohio Bluebird Project

The Ohio Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program has recently initiated a massive bluebird housing project. The goal of Ohio's Division of Wildlife is to eventually add 20,000 new bluebird homes in the State.

From an idea that originated in Minnesota, the plans call for nesting cavities to be drilled into the wooden fence posts that line Ohio's limited access highways. Holes are drilled down into the post from the top, measuring 3½ inches wide by 8 to 10 inches deep. A wooden roof is then nailed over the top opening and an entrance hole is drilled into the side of the post. Except for a lack of suitable nesting sites, the wide grassy roadsides offer good habitat for bluebirds to collect food and gather nesting material. Ohio has thousands of miles of such habitat along its interstate and limited access highways. To date, 850 cavities have been drilled.

Nongame Wildlife Fund

Probably most of us are now finding ways to put off the impending chore of doing our 1985 taxes. But when you finally get around to it, please remember to Do Something Wild! and check-off line 8 on your WV 1985 State Income Tax short form, or line 58 on the long form. Please note that if you are not eligible for a refund this year, you may still contribute by sending a check or money order to the Nongame Wildlife Fund, 1800 Washington Street, East, Charleston, WV 25305.

Hats off! to the Fort Ashby Extension Homemakers Club. As a club project this year, these conservation-minded individuals are supporting the WV Nongame Program by encouraging 100% of their membership to "check-off" for the Nongame Wildlife Fund. They are also challenging Mineral County's other 23 clubs to do likewise. The support of the Fort Ashby Club is deeply appreciated and it is hoped all West Virginians will take an interest in preserving West Virginia's unique and priceless wildlife heritage.

Remember to DO SOMETHING WILD! and support the West Virginia Nongame Wildlife Program.

"Check-off" Line 8 on your WV Income Tax Form.

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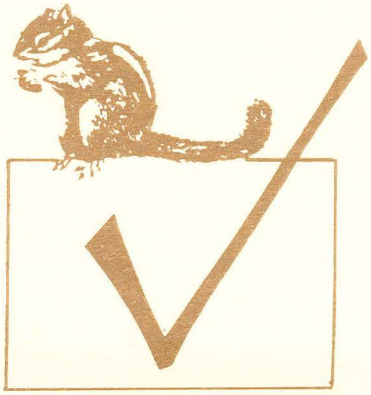
Ideas for articles are welcomed

West Virginia Birds

By George A. Hall

The winter snows have melted and many West Virginians are eagerly searching for that first real sign of spring - the robin. Whether you are a serious student of birds or an avid birdwatcher, you need to own this book. Not a field guide, the book contains the WV status, both current and historic, of over 300 bird species. Copies ($20.00 each) may be obtained from the Brooks Bird Club, 707 Warwood Avenue, Wheeling, WV 26001; Publications Secretary, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; or your local bookstore.



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